

First Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
3 Gray Road, North Yarmouth, Maine 04097
Organized in 1806



Third Sunday of Advent
December 12, 2021 ~ 9:30 a.m.

**The Third Sunday of Advent
December 12, 2021**

Prelude

Noel, Nouvelet Traditional French Carol Setting by Wilbur Held

“How Much is Enough? (Joy)”

Third Sunday of Advent

**Sung: *God welcomes all! Strangers and friends!
God’s love is strong! And it never ends!***

Words: John L. Bell, Music: South African traditional,
transcribed by John L. Bell at the Sunrise Hospice, Themba
Text: © 2008, GIA/Iona Community / WGRG

Welcome and Announcements

Leader: As John baptized new converts, he invited them to live with “changed hearts and lives.” When asked how to do that, his answers all point to making sure no one is cheated or left without the basic necessities of life, including the right to not be harassed. A full life of joy, which the prophet Isaiah describes as an ever flowing spring, is the birthright of all children of God. May we act to make it so.

We Open the Door

When God is a Child

Words: Brian Wren (1936-)

Music: John Carter (1930-)

Words ©1989, Music ©1998 Hope Publishing Company

**When God is a Child there’s [joy] in our song.
The last shall be first and the weak shall be strong,
And none shall be afraid.**

**Joy is a song that welcomes the dawn,
Telling the world that the savior is born.
When God is a Child there’s [joy] in our song.
The last shall be first and the weak shall be strong,
And none shall be afraid.**

Reader(s):

Today we offer the Light of Joy to illumine the Door of Welcome.
May this light shine in our hearts, in our lives, and in our church.

May Joy awaken us to possibilities and lead us to greater hospitality.
There *IS* room in this Inn, a House for the Holy.

**When God is a Child there's [joy] in our song.
The last shall be first and the weak shall be strong,
And none shall be afraid.
Joy is a song that welcomes the dawn,
Telling the world that the savior is born.
When God is a Child there's [joy] in our song.
The last shall be first and the weak shall be strong,
And none shall be afraid.**

The Peace

The Joy of Christ be with you!
And also with you!

As we rise in body or spirit for our opening hymn, I invite you to pass a “wave” of joy to the people around you (and the people worshipping at home)!

Opening Hymn/Song

[“Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates”](#)

Chalice 129

Words: Georg Weissel, 1642; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1855, alt.
Music: Psalmodia Evangelica, 1789

**Lift up your heads, O mighty gates; behold the glorious
Ruler waits! The Sovereign One is drawing near;
the Savior of the world is here.**

**Fling wide the portals of your heart; make it a temple,
set apart from earthly use for heaven's employ,
adorned with prayer and love and joy.**

**Redeemer, come! We open wide our hearts to you; here,
Christ, abide! Let us your inner presence feel,
your grace and love in us reveal.**

**So come, our Sovereign; enter in! Let new and nobler life begin;
your Holy Spirit guide us on, until the glorious crown be worn.**

Time for All Ages

First Reading

Isaiah 12: 2-6 (CEB)

*God is indeed my salvation;
I will trust and won't be afraid.
Yah, the Lord, is my strength and my shield;
he has become my salvation."
You will draw water with joy from the springs of salvation.
And you will say on that day:
"Thank the Lord; call on God's name;
proclaim God's deeds among the peoples;
declare that God's name is exalted.
Sing to the Lord, who has done glorious things;
proclaim this throughout all the earth."
Shout and sing for joy, city of Zion,
because the holy one of Israel is great among you.*

Anthem

Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus

Second Reading

Luke 3: 7-18 (CEB)

Then John said to the crowds who came to be baptized by him, "You children of snakes! Who warned you to escape from the angry judgment that is coming soon? Produce fruit that shows you have changed your hearts and lives. And don't even think about saying to yourselves, Abraham is our father. I tell you that God is able to raise up Abraham's children from these stones. The ax is already at the root of the trees. Therefore, every tree that doesn't produce good fruit will be chopped down and tossed into the fire."

The crowds asked him, "What then should we do?" He answered, "Whoever has two shirts must share with the one who has none, and whoever has food must do the same." Even tax collectors came to be baptized. They said to him, "Teacher, what should we do?" He replied, "Collect no more than you are authorized to collect." Soldiers asked, "What about us? What should we do?" He answered, "Don't cheat or harass anyone, and be satisfied with your pay."

The people were filled with expectation, and everyone wondered whether John might be the Christ. John replied to them all, "I baptize you with water, but the one who is more powerful than me is coming. I'm not worthy to loosen the strap of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. The shovel he uses to sift the wheat from the husks is in his hands. He will clean out his threshing area and bring the wheat into his barn. But he will burn the husks with a fire that can't be put out." With many other words John appealed to them, proclaiming good news to the people.

Message

Rev Nancy J White

Prayers of the People

"Lord, you left your throne"

Thou didst leave thy throne and thy kingly crown, alt

Author: E.S. Elliot (1864)

Tune: Margaret (Matthews)

**Lord, you left your throne and your kingly crown,
When you came to earth for me;
But in Bethlehem's home was there found no room
For your holy nativity.
O come to my heart, Lord Jesus,
Make joy in my heart for you.**

In this moment we open the doors of our hearts to honesty before God
about what we've done and left undone
that created less peace in a hurting world.

Let us breathe out this regret... *[pause to breathe out]*
and breathe in the life-giving, for-giving Spirit of God... *[pause to breath in]*
and out again with the Peace of Christ... *[another breath out]*.

**Lord, you left your throne and your kingly crown,
When you came to earth for me;
But in Bethlehem's home was there found no room
For your holy nativity.
O come to my life, Lord Jesus,
Make joy in my life for you.**

In this moment we open the doors of our lives to the call of the Spirit,
inviting us to become more than we can ask or imagine.

Let us breathe out our fear... *[pause to breathe out]*

and breathe in the courage of the Spirit of God... *[pause to breath in]*
and out again, with the Peace of Christ... *[another breath out]*.

**Lord, you left your throne and your kingly crown,
When you came to earth for me;
But in Bethlehem's home was there found no room
For your holy nativity.
O come to our church, Lord Jesus,
Make joy in our church for you.**

In this moment we open the doors of this church, filling it with
the compassion of Christ for all those who are struggling.
We remember and pray for...

.....

... those who are suffering economic hardship, and insecurity in basic needs;
may abundance be shared.

... those who are suffering mentally, finding it difficult to cope;
may paths open and hope return.

... those who are suffering illness or injury;
may healing abound.

.... those who are suffering loneliness and isolation;
may companionship and solace arrive.

... those who are suffering discrimination, fear and violence;
may they know respect, respite, and safety.

May the Advent of Compassion be born in us,
reside within us,
move outward from us,
to meet the needs of the world,
making a house for the Holy that is each and every child of God.

We pray this in the name of Jesus, who taught us to pray:

**Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come.
Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily
bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not**

into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

A Story of Innkeeping: Offering

Leader: Many imaginative tales have been spun about "The Inn" and the people who may have been involved in the story. As we've already said, we know very little about the circumstances from the Bible. Another theory is that it wasn't an inn at all but the downstairs of a house where the family animals were kept, under the top floor where the family lived. This scenario suggests that each and every home can be a birthing place for more goodness in this world. It suggests that this House of God, this church, might contain a surprising nook or cranny that could house a holy endeavor for bringing more joy to someone's life.

***Doxology**

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God for all that love has done;
Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One. Amen.**

Closing Carol

Leader: Today's closing carol is "What Child is This" that invites "peasants and kings" to claim Christ as their own (the Glory to God hymnal changes this to "one and all"). Chatterton Dix was not a clergy person like most of the hymn writers of the 19th century. He was a businessman in England. He asks the question, "Why lies he in such mean estate," referring to the stable, and in the original second verse, answers by connecting the humble, wooden birth manger to the wood of the cross "borne" at his death: [*see more about this history* [HERE](#)].

Why lies He in such mean estate,
where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear: for sinners here
the silent Word is pleading.
Nails, spear, shall pierce him through;
the cross be borne for me, for you
Hail, hail, the Word made flesh,
the babe, the son of Mary.

True joy acknowledges the suffering of the world, and invites all people regardless of status to claim Christ's grace and joy as salve for the soul. May we offer warm laps and soft lullabies to sooth a hurting world.

“What Child is This?”

Chalice 162

Words: William C. Dix, c. 1865 Music: English melody (16th century)

**What Child is this who, laid to rest, on Mary’s lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet, while shepherds watch are
keeping?**

***This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing:
haste, haste to bring him laud, the Babe, the Son of Mary.***

**Why lies he in such mean estate where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear: for sinners here the silent Word is pleading.**

***This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing:
haste, haste to bring him laud, the Babe, the Son of Mary.***

**So bring him incense, gold and myrrh, come, rich and poor, to own him.
the King of kings salvation brings, let loving hearts enthrone him.**

***This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing:
haste, haste to bring him laud, the Babe, the Son of Mary.***

Benediction

May God’s Door of Welcome
swing open in your heart and in your life.

May Christ’s humble first dwelling
remind you of the plenty you already know.

And may the Spirit lead you into
more possibility and hospitality than you can imagine,
making room in The Inn for all.

May it be so for you.
May it be so for us.
May it be so for this church.
Amen.

Postlude

Go Tell It On the Mountain Traditional Spiritual

Worship Notes: "The Inn" worship series by Worship Design Studio. Adapted, used, livestreamed with permission.
Hymns/songs licensed under One License #A-73187 and CCLI #48404708

Staff

Pastor: Rev. Nancy J. White
Administrative Assistant: Lyn Glassock
Organist: Peter Dickson*
Organist: Linda Lambrides
Choir Director: David Myers, Jr.
Sexton: Mark R.H. Heath
Treasurer: Liz McGlinn, CPA, CGMA

Church Phone: 829-3644
Church e-mail: nyarmouthccucc@gmail.com

Rev. Nancy J. White phone: 207-504-6289
Rev. Nancy J. White email: nyccrevnancy@gmail.com

Church Website: <http://nyccucc.com>
Maine Conference Website: www.maineucc.org
YouTube: [youtube.com/c/nyccucc](https://www.youtube.com/c/nyccucc)

Due to the Corona Virus-Covid-19, this service was held in-person and live streamed on YouTube with all CDC protocols in place.

If you are not receiving church emails and would like to, please send an email to nyarmouthccucc@gmail.com asking to be added to the list. Like the NYCC FB page and you will be notified of what is happening there, too!

Offering can also be made online through Tithely at <https://tithe.ly/give?c=1301940>